

SWWDB – PROGRAM OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
January 17, 2006
MINUTES
 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
 Mr. Larsen, Chairperson

The SWWDB Program Operations Committee met on Tuesday, January 17, 2006 in the Community Room of Wisconsin Community Bank in Monroe. Attendance was as follows:

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| Members Present: | Mr. Tom Daly | Mr. Tom Larsen |
| | Mr. Jim Finley | Mr. Tom Schraeder |
| | Ms. Cindy Harrington | Mr. Scott Stocker |
| | Dr. Karen Knox | Mr. Larry Ward |
| Members Excused: | Ms. Angie Skoubis | Ms. Margery Tibbetts |
| | Mr. Walter Orzechowski | |
| Others Present: | Mr. Bruce Palzkill | Ms. Judy Mathews |
| | Ms. Julie Funk | Mr. Geoff Upperton |
| | Ms. Mary Johannesen | |
| Staff Present: | Dr. Robert T. Borremans | Ms. Barb Tucker |
| | Ms. Shannon Moe | Ms. Annette Meudt |
| | Ms. Amy Charles | |

Mr. Larsen called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

1. Presentation of Local WIA Program Operator Monitoring Reports

Ms. Tucker noted that she, Ms. Moe, and Ms. Meudt recently completed monitoring of WIA funded programs. Programs are monitored to ensure appropriateness of the activities, fiscal accountability, accuracy of participant files, and to provide program operators with an opportunity to point out best practices or concerns. Ms. Tucker indicated that overall she was impressed with the accuracy of both the manual and computerized record keeping as the ASSET system itself is always changing and can be difficult for program operator staff to keep up with.

Other comments included the need to review the amount and type of paperwork operators are producing. Rather than always just adding new forms to the mix, staff should see where the process could be “streamlined”, and it would be helpful if program operators had guides or “cheat sheets” from the State.

It was also noted that program operators need to do better upfront planning for both enrollment and placements; this could reduce the number of observations noted during monitoring. Overall, the monitoring indicated that Dislocated Worker actual numbers (enrollments and placements) are lower than planned figures. AFL-CIO had a medical coding program that ended in December, which will hopefully lead to an increase in placements in January and February. Southwest Job Service is also underserved and steps to increase placements have been discussed with Mr. Palzkill to correct the situation. In-School youth programs are running well with no findings at this time.

Ms. Tucker also noted some best practices such as the spreadsheet application that AFL-

CIO has developed to note participants' skills and abilities, which they take with them along with participant resumes when they do on-sight visits with employers. The Rock County Job Center initiated a Job Seeker group that assists clients with resume writing workshops and other items.

Ms. Moe noted that any Program Operator with findings has already made steady improvement to correct their findings.

Ms. Meudt indicated that CESA # 2 is entering their expenditures incorrectly on the local performance tracking spreadsheet. No corrective action was noted but Ms. Meudt will have a conversation with them regarding the issue and required corrective steps. Ms. Meudt stated that monitoring uncovered one overall concern with the Payment Authorization System, (PAS) which relates to voucher follow-up. Job Service really needs to do a better job with Voucher Follow-up. A lot of funds are being tied up in vouchers that never materialize. Ms. Harrington asked if this meant funds are being authorized without being spent, and Ms. Meudt stated that yes this is what is happening. Ms. Harrington further questioned if those obligated funds could be rolled over, and Ms. Meudt indicated that they can, but failure to spend out funds in one year affects the WIA allocation in subsequent years. Unexpended funds could be deobligated and returned to the state. Also, unexpended funds affect SWWDB's ability to request Rapid Response Funds.

This spurred a group discussion on vouchers. Mr. Palzkill indicated many vouchers are used for gasoline in Southwest as participants travel to educational sites. Often problems occur if the vendor (gas station) does not get the participant signature on the voucher. This, then, becomes a staff issue as the participant must be tracked down. Both Mr. Ward and Mr. Stocker stated that perhaps a pre-paid debit card may work better for this application, and both indicated that the current voucher process seems to be excessively staff driven. It was noted that the Board should investigate options for streamlining the system.

A motion was made by Mr. Ward and seconded by Miss Harrington to approve the monitoring reports. **Motion carried unanimously.**

2. Eligible Training Provider Approval

Blackhawk Technical College (BTC) has requested approval of two short-term training programs to be added to the SWWDB Eligible Training Provides (ETP) List. These programs are: Transportation and Logistics Management Certificate and Customer Service Certificate. Mr. Larsen noted that both programs will be available at the Central Campus of Blackhawk Technical College.

Ms. Moe indicated that under WIA, eligible training providers are first required to seek approval from their local WDA and then will have their application forwarded to the State to be added to the ETP list. The normal SWWDB ETP approval process involves staff sending out information regarding the programs for full board review and comment. The committee is then authorized to take action to approve the programs for placement on the ETP list. However, information on these two programs was received late and there was inadequate time to hold the two-week review period by board members. Therefore, the application for these two programs is brought to the committee for recommendation to the full Board.

A motion was made by Dr. Knox and seconded by Mr. Daly to recommend to the full Board

approval of the Transportation and Logistics Management Certificate and Customer Service Certificate programs. **Motion carried unanimously.**

3. Program Operators Performance

Ms. Moe indicated that the reports are in the same format as in the past and have been updated through the end of December 2005. Ms. Moe noted that ALF-CIO is currently behind in the number of placements due to the fact that their medical coding class ended in December and they are striving for January and February placements. AFL-CIO's medical coding class had an 84% pass rate on their certification exams compared with a National average pass rate of 50% for similar classes.

CESA #2 had some errors in entering data which is believed to be because of new staff, SWWDB staff will work with CESA #2 to correct any errors. CESA # 3 is slightly overenrolled, but all else is very good.

Job Service Rock Out-of-School Youth Program is on target with December numbers. Job Service Rock Adult is on target as well. This program requires more intensive case management. Job Service Southwest Out-of-School Youth Program is slightly behind in enrollment but is exceeding its credentials performance measure. Job Service Southwest Adult entered employment is behind planned but is expected to meet projected levels for January and February. Job Service Southwest Dislocated Worker Program is slightly under in enrollment. Mr. Palzkill has submitted an action plan for correction to meet the planned enrollment.

4. WIA Local Plan Guidelines

Ms. Tucker indicated that the new WIA Local Plan Guidelines contain significant changes to the current service delivery system. The first draft of the plan is due March 31, 2006. Dr. Borremans indicated that more information will be presented at the January 18, 2006 Board meeting, when Bill Clingan and Connie Colussy from DWD will discuss the significance of the changes at the full Board Meeting. Dr. Borremans also indicated with the quick turn around required for the plan, it may be necessary to reschedule meeting dates, and to add additional planning meetings to the schedule.

Ms. Tucker highlighted some of the major changes for the committee. The most significant is the new standards for a Comprehensive Job Center (CJC). These new standards will change the structure of job centers in Southwest Wisconsin. The Southwest Wisconsin WDA currently has 5 CJC's, with the new guidelines it is likely that this number will be reduced to only one, Rock County. Services available at a CJC and the roles of the various partners must be documented through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Another important change is the shift in youth funding redirecting a greater portion of funds to Out-of-School Youth. Currently 26% of WIA funds are spent on direct training, the new guidelines require at least 35% be spent on direct training for high-wage jobs. This piece combined with the trend for an annual decrease in WIA allocation of 10% could eliminate almost 20% from current Program Operators budgets.

There is an overall emphasis on high-wage, high-growth jobs with special consideration for health care and one other locally defined high-growth, high-wage sector. Mr. Schraeder indicated there is mention of high-wage jobs being jobs that exceed the median income he wondered how that will be determined - for example by County or by WDA? Dr. Borremans indicated that DWD has not arrived at a final definition yet. He said this would

be a good question to ask Mr. Clingan and Ms. Colussy at the board meeting.

There is a new requirement for a Business Services Plan that identifies a fee for service schedule to employers, and an overall business driven focus to link job seekers with the skills needed to provide businesses with employees. Every CJC requires its' own Business Services Plan.

Mr. Ward noted that not only do these new plan guidelines appear to be a lot of work, they are a fundamental shift in the way that the WDA does business. Dr. Borremans concurred and indicated that the Board will be instrumental in shaping these changes.

5. **Rapid Response Program Update**

In 2005, SWWDB received two (2) rapid response grants to provide specialized assistance for permanently laid-off employees from Lands' End in Dodgeville and ATK-Alliant Techsystems in Rock County.

Mr. Palzkill indicated that Lands' End in Dodgeville lost 200 full and part-time positions. Many higher level employees were assisted directly through the company with head hunter services and received placement. 45 people in the CAD department however, did apply to be assisted. Mr. Palzkil indicated that the first group of thirteen (13) workers was enrolled in April 2005 and an additional enrollment in October was added 20 enrollees. Many of these individuals are in one or two year degree programs at SWTC many as RN and LPN students. Mr. Palzkil indicated that the outcomes, while behind at this time, are expected to be there at the end.

Mr. Upperton indicated that with ATK, 110 people applied to be considered and currently 65 are enrolled. He mentioned that many of these employees were offered severance packages and unemployment, and as those benefits wane, more employees will likely enroll in the program as the grant does not expire until June of 2007. He further noted that he believes that the system is often slow to respond to employment needs. He indicated that when there is a local demand for employees in a certain industry, everyone rushes for training in that field, and often by the time the training is completed the local need has been filled.

6. **Adjournment**

Dr. Knox moved and Mr. Larsen seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.** The next POC meeting is currently scheduled for Tuesday, April 18th, Wisconsin Community Bank, Monroe, but may need to be rescheduled due to the WIA Local Plan Guideline Process. Further information will be provided at a later time. The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.